



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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PRIBILOF ISLANDS FUR-SEAL TAKE FOR 1957 ANNOUNCED

The annual sealing operations conducted by the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, on the Pribilof Islands in Alaska ended August 20 and netted 93,618 fur-seal skins, Assistant Secretary of the Interior Ross Leffler reported today.

The take last year amounted to 122,826 skins. From 1940 to 1956 the average annual yield had been around 65,000 pelts.

The fur-seal industry of the Pribilof Islands has been operated by the United States Government since 1910. In 1911 an International Convention between the United States, Great Britain, Japan, and Russia to prohibit pelagic sealing--the killing of fur-seals at sea in the North Pacific--became effective.

This convention, which provided for the first time a sound basis for the management of the Alaska fur seals, remained in force for 30 years until terminated by Japan in October 1941. From 1942 the herd has been protected by a provisional agreement between Canada and the United States which reserved to Canada 20 percent of the skins taken each summer on the Pribilof Islands.

On February 9, 1957, a new ~~interim~~ North Pacific Fur-Seal Convention was concluded by Canada, Japan, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and the United States, similar in form to the 1911 convention. The new convention provides that Canada and Japan each shall receive 15 percent of the sealskins taken commercially by the United States and by the U.S.S.R. On behalf of the United States, this convention was ratified by the Senate on August 8. Japan and Canada have already taken the required legislative action and Russia is expected to exchange ratifications soon.

Approximately 80 percent of the world's fur seals go to the Pribilof Islands each summer to breed. During the winter these seals range southward as far as southern California.

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